

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, WMO
SUBJ: COOPERATIVE SATELLITE PROGRAM: BALLOON PROJECTS

REF : (A) STATE 048308
(B) LONDON 4028

1. PROJECT REFERRED TO IN REFTEL WAS DISCUSSED WITH MALAVASI, ASSISTANT TO PROF. SCANDONE, WHO INDICATED THAT SERVIZIO ATTIVITA' SPAZIALI (SAS) OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CNR) IS RELYING MORE ON CONTACT WITH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) THAN ON THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON RE FUTURE BALLOON LAUNCHES. MALAVASI EXPLAINED THAT IN 1975 THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON CONTACTED THE SAS TO LAUNCH TRANSATLANTIC BALLOONS FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN. SAS APPROVED THE PROJECT AND MADE A 2-YEAR (1975/76) AGREEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON BASED ON A 50-50 SPLIT IN FINANCING, UK WOULD SUPPLY TELEMETRY FACILITIES AND ITALY WOULD SUPPLY THE BASE AND LAUNCHING FACILITIES (MILO, TRAPANI PROVINCE, SICILY). FOR 1977-78, SAS IS SEEKING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NSF (PROJECT OFFICER IS DR. GIORGIO TESI, NATIONAL CENTER FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH PROGRAMS, NSF, WASHINGTON, D.C. (TEL. 632-5998) FOR PROGRAM OF BALLOON LAUNCHES TO WHICH UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON WOULD BE INVITED TO PUT SOME EXPERIMENTS ON THE

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BALLOON PAYLOAD. IN ADDITION, ITALY NOW HAS ITS OWN TELEMETRY STATION. MALAVASI INFORMED EMBASSY THAT BECAUSE OF GOI FUNDING CUT-BACKS, NO LAUNCH ACTIVITIES WERE PLANNED FOR 1977.

2. BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH MALAVASI, ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED PARA 5 REFTEL (A) ARE AS FOLLOWS (KEYED TO PARAGRAPHS):
(A) NOT APPLICABLE TO ROME;

(B) SAS CURRENTLY DEFINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENT
WITH NSF, WASHINGTON;

(C) MALAVASI MAINTAINED THAT SIGNATORY PARTIES FOR NOAA
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR USE OF GOES SATELLITE WOULD BE NSF
AND SAS;

(D) SEE PARA 1.

3. COMMENT: CNR AND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON APPEAR TO HAVE
SHARPLY DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS ON THE LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE BALLOON LAUNCH PROGRAM. THE DETERMINATION OF WHICH
INSTITUTION QUALIFIES AS "PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR" WILL REST
HEAVILY ON THE OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SAS AND NSF AND
AT THIS POINT, DESIGNATION OF EITHER WOULD SEEM TO BE PREMATURE.
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